CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/1223
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LETTER DATED 13 SEPTEMBER 1993, ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT BY THE DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF PORTUGAL, TRANSMITTING THE TEXT OF A STATEMENT ON THE "REPORT OF THE SPECIAL COORDINATOR OF THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT FOR THE ISSUE OF EXPANSION OF ITS MEMBERSHIP"

As I was unable to be present at the last plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament for reasons beyond my control, I have the honour to attach herewith the text of the statement I intended to make on the report of the Special Coordinator on the issue of the expansion of the membership of the Conference (CD/1214) and the "clarification" provided (26 August 1993).

I would be grateful if you could have my statement circulated to the members and observers of the Conference as an official document.

(Signed): Luis C. de Barros
Deputy Permanent Representative

GE.93-62471 (E)

Statement by the delegation of Portugal to the Conference on Disarmament on the "Report of the Special Rapporteur of the Conference on Disarmament for the issue of expansion of its membership" (CD/1214) and the clarification of 26 August 1993

The Portuguese Government is fully aware of the problems and great sensitivity of the task of the Special Coordinator and thanks Ambassador O'Sullivan for the efforts he has made to find an equitable solution.

However, it seems to us that we have missed an excellent opportunity to give significant content to the universality factor which is now as decisive for the credibility of the Conference on Disarmament as other factors given priority in the report, especially the effectiveness of the CD's work and regional balance. At a time when the Conference on Disarmament is beginning to discuss new and sensitive matters, the importance of universality has, moreover, rightly been recognized by the qualified representatives of several member States (and observers) in the statements they have made in plenary.

The Portuguese Government thus believes that the proposed solution overestimates the criteria of regional and global balance and that, without making the work of the CD any less effective, a more equitable solution could also be achieved by accepting all countries which have requested membership.

This expansion would reflect the real international balance that has emerged as a result of the end of the cold war by avoiding decisions that penalize countries which have decided to take an active part in the CD.

Portugal states once again that it is very interested in rapidly becoming a full member of the Conference on Disarmament. It therefore takes note of the content of the "clarification" provided by Ambassador O'Sullivan on 26 August, especially with regard to the efforts that will have to be made, "as a follow-up to the present expansion", to deal with the situation of candidates not admitted during this phase of the proceedings.

We look forward to seeing what action will be taken in the short term with a view to the implementation of the recommendations made by the Special Coordinator.